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AN APPEAL

FOR AN

INDUSTRIAL HOME

FOR THE

REFORMATION OF WOMEN

WHO ARE

HABITUAL DRUNKARDS.

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AN APPEAL FOR AN INDUSTRIAL HOME.

THE increase of drunkenness which has taken place during the last few years in certain classes of society, has directed public attention not only to the existing statutes, but to the necessity for the legislature granting further powers to meet this great and increasing evil.

To attain this object, the late Mr. Donald Dalrymple introduced into the House of Commons, in the Session of 1872, a Bill entitled "The Habitual Drunkards Bill," and also obtained a Special Committee to inquire generally into the subject; the report of this Special Committee was duly presented to the House of Commons, and ordered to be printed, in June, 1872.

It is however problematical if Parliament is prepared at the present time to legislate, and before so doing may require some information with respect to the success attending institutions established and supported by public benevolence.

The extent of the evil and the effects caused by intemperance, will be found in the following pages. An appeal is now made to establish an institution for the reception of persons who have become victims, and who are anxious to free themselves from its effects, but who are unable to do so without some external control and assistance.

INCREASE OF DRUNKENNESS.

From Colonel Henderson's report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the Metropolitan Police for the year 1875, it appears that the total number of persons apprehended by the police during the year was 72,606, of whom 49,712 were summarily convicted, and 2,343 convicted after trial.

There is an increase in the total arrests of 4,903 over the arrests in 1874. This large increase is almost wholly accounted for by the increase of drunkenness among the population. The charges of "drunk and disorderly" increased from 12,099 in 1874, to 14,926 in 1875, and for simple drunkenness, which may be taken as "drunk and incapable," from 14,056 in 1874, to 16,050 in 1875, the total increase under these two offences being 4,821, leaving the increase in all other offences put together at 182, with a rapidly increasing population.

INCREASE OF COMMITTALS OF WOMEN FOR DRUNKENNESS
IN MIDDLESEX.

The Visiting Justices of the Westminster Prison, in their report to the Court of Quarter Sessions, January last, state :—

"Upon reference to the special report of the Committee, recently circulated, it will be found that while in the year ending Michaelmas, 1871, there were only 2,314 sent to prison for this offence, the number had increased in the

year ending Michaelmas, 1874, to 3,971 ; and further, that in the year ending Michaelmas, 1875, this number had still further increased to 4,880, being more than a moiety of the prisoners committed. The increase of drunkenness is further demonstrated by a return which the Visiting Justices have had drawn up, giving the committals during the last six months ending November, 1875, and of the corresponding months of the four preceding years ; for whereas, in the first period of six months (1871) the numbers were only 1,517, in the last (1875) they were not less than 2,748, the total committals being only 4,342."

After the passing of the Licensing Act of 1872, 35 & 36 Vic., cap. 94, the number of committals for drunkenness increased from 3,025 to 5,306, probably from a too stringent interpretation of the Act on the part of the police. In the following year the numbers fell to 3,971, but again increased in the year ending Michaelmas, 1875, to 4,880 being an increase in the year of 909, and upon the return for the five years of 2,566.

Passing to the year ending Michaelmas, 1876, a still further increase is found, namely, from 4,880 in the year ending Michaelmas, 1875, to 5,588 in the year ending Michaelmas last, being an increase of 708 upon the year, and an increase in the last six years of 3,074.

If to the 5,588 prisoners committed during the year ending Michaelmas last for being drunk and disorderly, is added the cases of assaults, illegal pawning and minor offences induced by drink, the percentage of prisoners committed during the year from this cause, either directly or indirectly, will be found to be not less than 80 per cent. of the total committals.

In other large towns in England a similar increase has taken place.

DRUNKENNESS THE CAUSE OF CRIME, DISEASE, AND POVERTY.

That drunkenness is the prolific parent of crime, disease and poverty, has been from time immemorial admitted; this received impression is fully confirmed not only by the evidence contained in the report of the Special Committee, but by the governors, chaplains and medical officers of our prisons, superintendents of reformatories, industrial schools, workhouses, and philanthropic institutions.

It is impossible to overrate the importance of the subject under consideration. It is drink which causes the death of thousands, is the great incentive to crime and reduces large masses of the population to poverty and disease. It is through intemperance that a vast number of our homes, our warehouses, our churches, and other public and private buildings are set on fire, that our ships are lost and serious accidents both on land and sea so frequently occur.

In a return given to the Special Committee by Mr. Henry Webster, the Governor of the Hull Prison, it is stated that 79 per cent. of the prisoners attributed their ruin and downfall to drinking habits; in another prison it is estimated that 75 per cent. became inmates from the same cause.

The following extracts from reports kindly furnished by the chaplains and surgeons of the Middlesex and Surrey Prisons, give an equally high percentage.

The Rev. W.
F. Stocken.

The Rev. W. F. Stocken, the Chaplain of Cold-Bath-Fields Prison, reports:—

“The number of commitments to this prison during the year 1874–75 for drunkenness and riotous conduct was 2,500. The commitments for assaults during the same period numbered 2,300, of which number it would not be too much to say that 2,000 were caused by drunkenness. This number 4,500, sadly great as it truly is, by no means indicates the number of commitments caused indirectly by drunkenness. The number of commitments for other offences during the year 1874–75 was 6,758, and from my private conversations with our prisoners, I firmly believe that I am much within the mark when I say that but for drunkenness, and the evil and ruinous consequences which follow in its train, there would not have been one-half of that number of commitments during the period.”

The Rev.
The Ordinary of
Newgate.

The Ordinary of Newgate, in a letter to a member of the Committee, thus expresses himself:—

I will undertake to say that most of the murders which are committed, and crimes of violence, may be traced to drink as their immediate cause.”

The Rev. George
Hough.

The Rev. George Hough, formerly Chaplain at the House of Detention, and late Chaplain to the Westminster Prison, writes:—

“I have paid somewhat particular attention to this subject, and I am quite convinced that 85 per cent. of the commitments are owing to this degrading vice. I do not mean to say that so many are actually charged with the offence, but I do maintain that if anyone would take the trouble to carefully investigate all the cases of petty thefts,

assaults, 'kleptomania' (so called), he would find that I am quite within the mark. I form my opinion from a fact which occurred at the House of Detention, Clerkenwell. I undertook, at the request of the late Archdeacon Sandford, a man who took a lively interest in the question, to closely inquire into the primary as well as the actual causes which led to the commitments of the various prisoners who might happen to come under my notice during a certain fixed period. The number of cases, taken just as they came on my list, amounted to 4,420. The result satisfied me that the percentage given would be traced either directly or indirectly to excessive indulgence in intoxicating drinks. I have no reason to hope that there is any falling off in the number in later years."

The Rev.
William H.
L. Gilbert.

The Rev. W. H. L. Gilbert writes: "During the 12 months ending 29th September last, the number of prisoners received into the House of Correction, Wandsworth, was, males 3,380, females 1,673, in both cases an increase on the preceding year. Of these, 615 men and 958 women were sent for drunkenness and riotous conduct, while 232 men and 556 woman have been re-convicted for these offences, many of them over and over again, during the same period of time. Besides these, 608 men and 126 women have been sent for assaults committed, in almost every instance, under the influence of drink.

"I do not think I need say more to prove the prevalence of this degrading vice, which in this prison the above figures show to be in proportion much more prevalent amongst the women than amongst the men. This sad and humiliating fact, moreover, must not be lost sight of, that

it is not only amongst older prisoners that drunkenness prevails so extensively, but young girls of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen are frequently here for that offence, as well as youths of equally tender years. Brought up in an atmosphere of sin and degradation, hardly knowing what it is to see those about them either sober or honest, it is no wonder that drinking and its attendant miseries become a part of the children's daily lives, when their natural protectors set them so hideous an example; and so it is that they go on from bad to worse; evil habits of all kinds become confirmed in them, and a life of crime is the inevitable result of an existence spent in the constant association with drunkenness and debauchery, and too often ends in felony and penal servitude."

Captain J. Rowland Brookes, the Superintendent of the County of Middlesex Industrial School at Feltham, thus writes in a letter to a member of the Committee:—

"I rejoice to think that you intend to agitate the question of doing something to stem the ruin and profligacy caused by that curse of the labouring classes—Drink!

"Not only does it lead those under its influence into penury, crime, and insanity, filling our workhouses, prisons, and lunatic asylums, but also, alas! it spreads its baneful influence to the next generation, thus feeding our Reformatories and Industrial Schools. This is manifestly shown by the fact that of the 232 boys admitted into this School during 1875, no less than 67 owe their admission to neglect resulting from the drunken habits of their parents (or nearly 29 per cent.) These sixty-seven cases

are classified as follows :—Father drinks, fifty-eight, step-father, one, father and step-mother, one, father and mother, four, mother three.

“Nor can it be doubted that this by no means represents the entire amount of boys who owe their fall into vicious and disorderly courses to the intemperate habits of their parents. I firmly believe that a stricter inquiry and analysis would almost double the number. Nor is this misfortune limited to the boy’s moral character, but also his physical frame suffers, and the lad rendered scrofulous, consumptive, and debilitated, thus unfitting him from gaining his livelihood in after life.

“Indeed, the curse of drink seems to pursue the lad continuously ; for when by care and discipline his mind has acquired a wholesome moral tone, and his frame restored to a comparatively healthy condition, then these same parents again step in, decline to sanction any suitable provisions for the boy, but drag him back to their wretched home, and utterly mar his prospects in life.

“I have known cases in which a boy has been taken back home in this manner ; that his parents have on the evening of his return pawned the decent suit of clothes in which he was dressed (and even his bible), and purchased gin with the proceeds, turning out the lad the next morning to earn a livelihood as best he could.”

Rev. W. A. Newton. The Rev. W. A. Newton, Chaplain to the

Middlesex Industrial Schools at Feltham, writes : “Among the various causes to which may be traced the origin of crime amongst our juvenile criminals, stand prominently, first, ‘the drunkenness of parents ;’ of 186 admitted into the Middlesex School at Feltham under

the provisions of the 'Industrial Schools Act,' no less than 30 principally attribute their fall to this cause; of this number no less than 56 had drunken fathers. Can we be surprised if the children become juvenile criminals, seeing that their parents are slaves to this crying evil?

"The drunken father, returning home at night sullen or impassioned by this terrible vice, adds cruelty to the list of woes; the children cuffed, kicked and beaten, till terrified they flee to the streets, and once there soon become the associates of thieves and bad companions.

"The boy must in process of time fall into the hands of the police or School Board officer, and is dragged before the Magistrate, and it is a happy day for him if he is sent to an Industrial School instead of to prison to mix with common felons. But even when he has found a refuge in a school, the curse of drunkenness makes itself felt hereafter.

"The boy is found to be utterly ignorant, even perhaps of the Saviour who died for him; but by the patience and care of those under whom he is placed, learns habits of cleanliness and sobriety, prayerfulness and honesty, and it may be he shows some talent for music, and desires to enter a regimental band, or loving a roving life, prefers the sea; or wishing to escape the miseries of home, desires to emigrate. The drunken father in numerous cases induces the boy to return home to squalor, misery, and vice, that he may earn money for him to spend in drink, and when work fails, the boy is again turned adrift into the streets, and usually finds his way to prison."

This is no overdrawn statement, but the plain naked truth, and is an evil that cries aloud for the interference of the State.

In the case of a boy wishing to enter a regimental band or to emigrate, the consent of a parent is required; this is constantly refused from the cause noted by the Chaplain.

The Rev. N. G. Pilkington, many years
Chaplain to the County of Middlesex Industrial School at Feltham, thus writes: "I have no hesita-

tion in stating that there would never have been any necessity for the Industrial School at Feltham had the parents of the children sent there been sober men and women."

It was the exception, and a rare one, to be able to enter any other cause than the stereotyped one of "drunkenness" of either one or both parents, as the reason of the child's vagrancy or crime, and consequent detention.

Dr. Smiles writes: "During the last thirty-six years I have seen an immense number of prisoners admitted into Cold-Bath-Fields Prison, and from inquiries I have made I feel satisfied that not less than five-sixths of the number owe their imprisonment directly or indirectly to habits of intemperance. The mischief caused by excessive drinking cannot be exaggerated; it no doubt causes disease of the liver, the kidneys and the mucus membrane of the alimentary canal, and ultimately of the brain itself, and renders the victims of it peculiarly liable to acute attacks of illness affecting the respiratory organs and the heart. When a drunkard is admitted into prison, and stimulants denied him, in many cases in a day or two an attack of delirium tremens comes on, which in my experience passes off in a few days, the patient being placed in a padded cell without restraint, and supported with stout, beef-tea and cocoa. Afterwards I

believe no bad results arise from a total discontinuance of stimulants."

DRUNKENNESS THE CAUSE OF INSANITY AND SUICIDES.

Dr. Sheppard, the Medical Superintendent of the male department of the County of Middlesex Lunatic Asylum, Colney Hatch, thus writes in his last report: "It is painful again to allude to the large part which alcoholic intemperance plays in the production of insanity. A careful analysis of the year's admissions clearly establishes a percentage of more than 28 as due to this cause. And I am persuaded, from the character of the individuals and the form of their malady, in other cases where the causation is not assigned or cannot be accurately traced, that an addition of 12 per cent. may directly or indirectly be attached to the same origin. Thus we have an approximate record of 40 per cent. of the madness of Middlesex, as due to an avoidable cause, and that cause the growing passion for drink."

Dr. James
Crichton
Browne.

Dr. James C. Browne, Superintendent of the West Riding Asylum at Wakefield, states that in the year 1868 or 1869, he made a statistical investigation as to the connection between drunkenness and insanity in the West Riding, and went over 500 cases of lunacy. He found 75, or 15 per cent., were directly due to drunkenness. In January, 1872, he made a careful examination of all the cases admitted during the year 1871; 404 lunatics were admitted, 174 males and 230 females. He found that out of the 404 cases, 58 were due to intem-

perance, which nearly corresponded to the investigation in 1869, giving 14 per cent. as against 15 in the former year. Dr. James C. Browne states, that he considers that any form of mental disease may be produced by drunkenness, and further that a large number of cases of mental derangement are indirectly due to drunkenness, as in the case where a drunkard transmits a weak nervous system to his offspring. He adds in confirmation, the statement of Dr. Howe, of Massachusetts, who says that out of 300 idiots 145 had drunken parents.

The Rev. Joseph Wheeler, late Chaplain of the House of Detention, Clerkenwell, in his Report to the Visiting Justices, in October, 1875, writes, under the head of Attempted Suicides.

“The Chaplain cannot but remark upon the annually increasing numbers of this class of prisoners. In 1865, when the numbers committed were 8,934, there were 165 suicide cases, or some $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. In 1875, when the numbers committed were 7,404, 246 cases, or 3 per cent., came under the Chaplain’s notice. And the question is naturally asked, how can you account for so large a proportion? To the Chaplain it appears that it is owing chiefly to the increase of drunkenness amongst the lower order of women, as only a small percentage of the 246 suicide cases, 157 of whom were women, were cases of determined attempts at ‘self-destruction,’ the remainder being those whose conduct while under the influence of drink, such as wandering by the river, or uttering some threat, had given rise to suspicion.”

SHORT TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT FOR DRUNKENNESS.

Repression. The evidence taken before the Select Committee, clearly demonstrates that the present state of the law and short terms of imprisonment for drunkenness is ineffectual, and consequently the Select Committee report "that small fines and short terms of imprisonment are proved to be useless, as well as by the testimony of competent witnesses, as by the fact that the same individual is convicted over and over again to even more than 100 times."

The following interesting information on this subject has been given by the Chaplains of the Prisons of Cold-Bath-Fields, Westminster, and Wandsworth, and by the two Medical Officers of the Middlesex Prison. Mr. Antrobus, a Visiting Justice of upwards of twenty-six years, fully confirms their statements and views as to the utter uselessness of short terms of imprisonment and small fines.

Of the number of committals for drunkenness to Cold-Bath-Fields' Prison during the last four months, one had been 99 times before, one 82 times, five upwards of 40 times, and 9 from 16 to 38 times. "This list," Rev. W. Stocken. writes the Chaplain, "might easily be enlarged, it gives only the worst cases. It may well be argued from these cases that the practice of sending persons repeatedly to prison for drunkenness is useless. The term of imprisonment is frequently a few days; a term so short that the effect of their drunkenness scarcely passes off before their discharge: if an assault has been committed as well, the offender may possibly be sentenced to three months, and he is only sent to serve a term of six months if he

happens to choose his wife as the victim of his brutality. Even in these longer sentences, the treatment in a prison is not suited for habitual drunkards; the monotony and prolonged abstinence from what they regard as the one luxury of life, seems often to aggravate their mania, so that on being released they plunge headlong into dissipation. I believe it is the opinion of the medical profession, that habitual drunkards should be sent to establishments where they might receive judicious treatment, proper diet, &c., and should be detained until they were cured. That such establishments would prove a success, it is not within my province to assert. I can only say that my experience enables me to bear testimony that prison is not the place to reform them."

Rev. George
Hough.

The late Chaplain of Westminster Prison writes:—"As to 'Repression,' I can only say this, I do not for a moment believe or even hope that the present system of fine and short imprisonment will ever cure the diseased prisoners: habitual drunkards especially, go out after three, seven, fourteen, or twenty-one days, as the case may be, weak in body, with no appetite for wholesome nourishment, and craving for 'just one drop to set them up;' that one drop leads to another, and four out of every six who are discharged on the Monday, are occupants of either the police or prison cell before the week is out. Frequently we have them in the same evening, very frequently within twenty-four hours."

"The short sentences which the law allows to

The Rev. W. H.
L. Gilbert.

be inflicted upon habitual drunkards are worse than useless, so far as deterring them from constantly returning to prison is concerned, and this

especially in the case of women ; the figures given already will abundantly prove, when a person has been committed repeatedly upon this charge for sentences varying from three days to one month (the utmost extent at present allowed by law), these sentences entirely lose their effect and are looked upon by drunkards merely as intervals of time during which they will be well taken care of, and be fitted to commence their old courses again when liberty provides the opportunity."

Dr. Smiles. "A large number of prisoners are committed every year to Cold-Bath-Field Prison for drunkenness and drunken assaults, for short terms from three days upwards; these short sentences appear to me to be a great evil; the prisoners scarcely recover from their drunkenness before they are discharged and return immediately to their old habits. Many prisoners have been committed upwards of a hundred times, and I think in the cases of these habitual drunkards the magistrate should have the power of giving long sentences."

Dr. Lavies. Dr. Lavies, Surgeon of the Westminster Prison, writes, "I take this opportunity of remarking on the effect which longer terms of imprisonment lately inflicted on habitual criminals, particularly drunkards, have produced. It is certain that this effect has been good, the changes wrought in appearance, strength, and vigour having been often little short of marvellous; in spite of this, however, many of these prisoners return to their old habits as soon as they are free, albeit they have repeatedly expressed their own sense of the great benefit they have derived from deprivation of spirituous liquors.

"I have no wish to include in this report any matter

that might be considered irrelevant to its ordinary purpose; but I ask permission to express my opinion that many, if not most of such cases as I have referred to, ought to be looked on and treated as instances of moral insanity. This subject appears to me as one so full of interest and so deep in medical importance, as to be well worthy of further serious legislative attention. To treat many of these cases medically, and not to punish them, would form an object alike benevolent in design and beneficent in operation."

A second and third class of habitual drunkards and dipsomaniacs, both men and women, do not usually come under the power of the law.

LEGISLATION.

Although small fines and short terms of imprisonment may to some slight degree have a deterrent influence, they do not in a very large number of cases meet the evil. In the case of fines, in consequence of the habitual drunkard spending almost every penny in drink, and leaving his or her family in a state of starvation and wretchedness, the alternative of a short term of imprisonment is almost always accepted.

In illustration of this, out of 448 prisoners committed to Westminster Prison in August last for drunkenness and assaults on the police, only 26 paid penalty after committal to prison.

The habitual drunkard cares little for such punishment, the prison and its cells are entered without shame, and are

only left to commence a further career of intoxication, and in the end becomes a constant charge on the rates either in the prison, the workhouse, or the lunatic asylum.

That short terms of imprisonment are only in a very slight degree deterrent, the following return of commitments of women to the Westminster Prison during the year 1875, for drunk and disorderly conduct, proves conclusively.

It is therefore to other measures and further legislation that we must look for prevention and repression—a system more deterrent, and at the same time more reformatory.

Committals to
Westminster
Prison.

Of the 4,480 women committed to the Westminster Prison for being drunk and disorderly during the year 1875, three-fourths were sent for periods under fourteen days, and the far greater number, as before stated, had been repeatedly in prison, their committals extending over many years. The expense annually incurred in the detention and support of this class of prisoner is enormous, and without any good result or reformatory influence.

LEGISLATION, SANATORIA, &c.

Dr. Forbes
Winslow.

Dr. Forbes Winslow, in his evidence before the Select Committee, makes the following statements:—"My opinion has been, that if establishments were organized for the reception of persons addicted to chronic habits of intemperance, hundreds would avail themselves of those institutions, and voluntarily surrender themselves for a time to control and treatment.

“ Such institutions are, to my mind, one of the great and crying wants of the age. The class of cases to which I refer are not admissible into ordinary lunatic asylums, as they cannot be legally certificated to be of unsound mind, according to the strict letter of the law.

“ Medical men who have to certify as to the mental unsoundness of the person prior to his being placed under legal restraint, have to state what they themselves observe as to his insanity or mental unsoundness; and unless they can detect some aberration of intellect, evidenced by hallucination, delusion, or clearly manifest disorder of the brain, such as general paralysis or softening, and unless they can insert in the document that the patient is suffering from some aberration of intellect, specifying what its form is, or detect symptoms of diseased brain, such as softening of the brain or general paralysis, they cannot legally sign the certificate. The fact of a man or woman being an habitual and violent drunkard is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the statute test, and therefore there are numerous cases which one would gladly place under restraint—and which ought to be under restraint—not only for the protection of their own lives, but for the protection of the lives of others, which cannot be dealt with.

“ Where you can establish habitual drunkenness, and the patient is not inclined voluntarily to put himself in an asylum, I think the fact of his being proved to be in this condition should be sufficient to justify confinement. There are many cases of this kind that you cannot deal with. I know numbers of ladies moving in very good society who are never sober, and are often brought home by the police

drunk. They are the wives of men in a very high social position. I have been often consulted about these cases, and my hands are tied ; I could not legally consign them to the asylums. I have no doubt there is the insanity of drunkenness in them, but it is not the insanity which comes within the strict letter of the law. The legislature does not recognize habitual drunkenness as a form of insanity, although medical men do. Of course it is very difficult to draw a line of demarcation between what I should term *normal* and *abnormal* drunkenness. Of course there is normal drunkenness, as there are normal forms of any other vice ; but when it passes the boundary line, and ceases to be a vicious propensity, whatever form it may assume, then the depraved morbid craving for stimulants is clearly traceable to the mental condition, and of course under these circumstances you may deal with the disease, or you ought to be able to deal with it. There is a morbid craving for stimulants which is clearly traceable to a brain condition ; it is a form of insanity, although it is not recognized by law. A man who has had ample opportunity of observing these cases and studying them, is able to diagnose pretty accurately the difference between normal drunkenness and abnormal drunkenness."

In reply to the following question (1338), "How far do you believe, that if private institutions provided with legislative power to retain patients for an adequate period of time, were established, could they be made for the upper and middling classes to pay their way, our object being of course to separate those which could be provided by the State in some shape or other from those which could be provided by private enterprise ?"

Dr. Forbes Winslow replies:—"I believe such institutions would be a national blessing, and in many cases I believe they would be self-supporting. I am satisfied that I could have had under my care some thousands (I am speaking within bounds) of cases of morbid drunkenness—I might say, of insane drunkenness; which I could have placed under restraint if I had an opportunity of doing it. I have seen the most frightful amount of loss of life, poverty brought on families, grievous, dreadful, and dire domestic distress and sorrow, and families wrecked and ruined by not being able to deal with these cases. In fact, as I have often said, 'Your husband or wife is committing suicide, and requires as much to be controlled as if they were taking belladonna or opium, or any other poison.'

"I believe that if sanatoria were established on a broad basis, and the inmates of those institutions were allowed a certain amount of rational enjoyment, and subjected to the minimum amount of restraint, and that not an offensive restraint, and had all the reasonable indulgences of life brought within their reach, thousands would go into those institutions."

Dr. Smiles. Dr. Smiles states:—"In private practice the treatment of these cases is much more difficult than in public institutions, and I think that asylums ought to be established where drunkards can be watched and taken care of, and proper certificates signed, as in the case of lunatics."

The Rev. W. R. L. Gilbert again writes:—
 The Rev. William R. L. Gilbert. "It appears to me that dipsomaniacs should be treated in the same way as other lunatics; for I suppose it will scarcely be denied that drinking when

indulged in without restraint does amount to a most fatal madness, and is therefore quite as much in need of repressive legislation as any other kind of mental disorder. And I believe that the only way to cope effectually with this growing calamity will be to build asylums for this class of lunatics; or perhaps some of the prisons which it is proposed to close might be utilised in this way, where by strict compulsory rules and regulations as to diet, &c., combined with healthy surroundings, both by example and precept, they may be kept for years, if necessary, from all debasing influence of their former modes of life, and have some hope of becoming eventually, by God's blessing, cured and useful members of society."

Helena L.
Antrobus.

A lady visitor at the Westminster Prison writes:—"I feel more and more convinced, after many years experience in prison and workhouse visiting, that there is little hope of cure for women who have once taken to drinking, unless they can be placed under lengthened restraint, medical treatment, and religious influence. Neither prisons nor workhouses are the places for them; I do not believe an habitual drunkard has ever gone out from either really reformed or cured. Out of 4,342, the total number of prisoners committed to the House of Correction, Westminster, during the six months ending November, 30th, 1875, 2,748 were sent for this offence alone, and it may be fairly stated that two-thirds of them have been more than once committed. They are of all ages, and many have been committed over and over again to prison forty, fifty, and sixty times, for sentences varying from three to fourteen days, or a month. One woman who died not long since, had been in and out

for twenty years; another, who was found dead in her cell, was undergoing a short sentence for nearly the fortieth time. Numbers discharged on a Saturday, will return on the following Monday; and often in such a sad state, the effect of their intoxication has hardly time to go off during the three days of their confinement, so that it is in many instances scarcely any punishment for them to be fed on bread and water, or gruel, while on the other hand they have the advantage in winter of a warmed cell, and at all times a comfortable bed, and their clothes thoroughly washed and cleansed.

“Short sentences appear utterly to fail in effecting any reformation, and show the extreme and urgent need of a sanatorium or reformatory to which women who either are or are likely to become habitual drunkards could be sentenced by magistrates for long terms, instead of as now being sent to prison over and over again for a few days; for if sufficient time were given for the nerves to recover and gain a healthy tone, there would be great hope that many of these wretched creatures, who lives are now a misery to themselves and others, would, under religious influence, medical treatment, and judicious care, be able to reform and become useful members of society at last. If a woman commits a felony she is liable to penal servitude for five or more years (if she is shown to be an habitual criminal, she seldom gets less than seven years), and it would be a social benefit if women who drink habitually could be committed for similar periods to a reformatory or ‘Industrial Home,’ expressly for such cases. An institution between a prison and a lunatic asylum is what is really needed, as many of these women would behave

admirably under restraint, and are really earnest in their desire to amend; but after a short sentence, the craving for spirits immediately returns, and without help they really lose the power to control themselves, and should to a certain extent be treated as insane or suffering from disease; and my earnest hope is that as soon as possible an Industrial Home of this kind may be commenced, which could hereafter be certified under the provisions of an Act of Parliament; as it is believed there are hundreds of women who would most thankfully place themselves in an institution where real help would be given them to overcome the disease.

“The Visiting Justices of the Westminster Prison furnished a report not long since relating to the large and increasing number of women committed for drunkenness in the year 1875, which showed the callings pursued by the various offenders to be, charwomen 890, needlewomen 796, washers or ironers 1,330, servants 166, sewing machinists 35, bookfolders 30, artificial flower makers 28, of no occupation 1,796, women of a respectable class, such as wives of men with comfortable homes and women of small independent means 100, total during the year, 5,131, of which number 3,811 had been previously convicted.

“This return, in addition to my own observations as a lady Visitor for many years at Westminster Prison and St. George’s Union, induces me to believe that the principal causes of drunkenness amongst women of the lower classes are overwork of body and mind, insufficient food, want of proper dwellings, air, light, and exercise, idleness, and ignorance of religion.

“Laundry women and cooks, who are especially addicted

to this vice, have told me the constant heat in which they work takes appetite away, they feel sinking and must take something, so they fly to spirits as the cheapest and most easily obtainable help as they term it. Amongst the former, hours of work are excessive; many have told me they have worked ten, twelve, and fourteen hours a-day for 2s. 6d., out of which they have to find their own food; no care is ever taken, as far as I can learn, to provide in private laundries proper sustaining diet, which might be easily obtained by the workers, while spirits are always to be had, and in many no supervision whatever exists to separate good from bad characters. Laundries are often dens of iniquity, and during the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun weeks it is a common thing for employers to accept the fact as a matter of course that not one of their hands will be sober. And with regard to cooks, who are so frequently found to be confirmed drunkards, is it not far too often the case that they have to work in great heat, without sufficient air and light, very seldom finding time for rest or quiet thought, with no exercise to speak of, and very rare opportunities of going to church?

“A medical man who has a large practice in London, made the remark a few days since that he was surprised to find people in such a state of excitement over Bulgarian atrocities, while there where such horrors going on unheeded at their own doors; he mentioned the fact that in this great city numbers and numbers of domestic servants were living in rooms totally unfit for human habitation, without ventilation of any sort or kind, or any regard being paid that their sleeping accommodation should be conducive to health; thus hundreds broke down shattered

in mind and body, ending their days in poverty and work-houses, after having given the best years of their lives for the comfort of their employers, an observation which will be fully confirmed by other medical men, who can state that this fact is not confined to small dwellings, but is the same in many of the larger and most important houses in the metropolis.

“In nearly all cases, I find that it is spirits rather than beer that women fly to; rum, gin, and brandy; even very young girls of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen, whom I have met with in prison, see no harm in it, and as they grow older and it becomes a habit, they know not how to leave off; religion is often a mere name, self-discipline utterly unknown; so they sink lower and lower, hopeless and wretched beyond words, but powerless to resist their fate. I have often regretted there is no law to prevent the sale of spirits except by order from a doctor, they cannot, except in cases of illness at any rate, be necessary for women, whose brains so easily become excitable and irritable; and it seems strange that while laws are given to prevent as far as possible self-destruction by limiting the sale of poisons, the slower suicidal effects of alcohol are ignored altogether.

“One of the most troublesome prisoners in the Westminster House of Correction, who though only six and twenty, has been in and out of prison for nine years for being drunk and disorderly, is at times so violent, three men are required to move her to the dark cell, she appears literally possessed by an evil spirit, smashes everything she can lay hold of, and tears up her clothes, shrieks and yells out language so fearful and horrible that other prisoners and

old hands shudder, is not really a fit case for either a prison or a lunatic asylum ; neither punishment nor kindness have any influence over her during her passions ; she is really mad for the time being, and I believe quite unable to control herself ; but at other moments she will be quiet, remorseful, full of good resolutions, and though so far gone might even yet be saved and cured by lengthened compulsory restraint in an institution especially adapted for the treatment of dipsomaniacs. She states she never could settle to anything after leaving an orphan school, so took to drinking to fill up the time ; then the craving for spirits increased on her till at times she has almost lived upon rum for a month together, scarcely taking any food. In her frenzies she will rave against drink as the cause of all her wretchedness, and yet will return to it the instant she is free, thus hating the vice while infatuated with it."

The establishment of sanatoria and reformatories for the reception of "dipsomaniacs" and "habitual drunkards," recommended by the Select Committee of the House of Commons, demands the earnest consideration of philanthropists.

An Appeal is therefore made for funds to establish an Industrial Home, and to commence the work of reformation at once, as there are numbers who would thankfully place themselves in any institution where they might hope to be cured. A suitable house, with grounds, is to be had in the neighbourhood of London, where laundry work on an extensive scale could be carried on, as well as every other sort of lucrative and useful employment likely to have a beneficial effect, both morally and physically ;

and it is anticipated that the Institution, when once established, will to a great extent be self-supporting.

To establish this work it is estimated, after careful investigation, that the sum of £4,000 will be required.

The following gentlemen have kindly consented to act as a Committee for carrying this project into effect:—

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The scheme is approved of by:—

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The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Salisbury.

The Right Rev. Bishop Tufnell.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Strathmore.

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